

THE DELIUS SOCIETY

Secretary:

NEWSLETTER MAY 1963.

Mrs. B. Ruffle,  
Doughty Cottage,  
Haverfield Gdns.  
Kew, Surrey.

It was most gratifying to see 28 members at the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 4th May, in London, considering how many of our members live outside London. It was certainly most enjoyable meeting members in person, and several members stressed the need for more frequent meeting in future, with which the Committee are in full agreement.

For those members who were unable to be present, a brief resumé of the meeting might be useful. Dr. Gibson, our founder, and the Chairman opened the meeting with a few introductory remarks and Miss. Todd, our Treasurer, then presented the Statement of Income and Expenditure, which showed a credit balance on 30th April, 1963 of £29.18. 7d. During the course of the meeting, it was agreed that one of the most important things to be done during the next year is to recruit new members. We should aim to double our membership to 200, and members are asked to help towards this by recruiting as many members as they can.

After the Treasurer's report, the meeting was thrown open for general discussion. We were most fortunate in having on the platform with the Committee Mr. Felix Aprahamian, who is an adviser to the Delius Trust, and we were most grateful to him for coming along, especially for his encouraging remarks about the Society itself.

The following points were raised by members:-

1. Why is there still difficulty in obtaining certain Delius scores? Mr. Aprahamian suggested that any member who is unable to obtain a score because it is out of print should address a memorandum to the Delius Trust, listing which scores are unobtainable, and then the Delius Trust will endeavour to put pressure on the publishers to issue a reprint. Any requests should be sent to Mr. Aprahamian at his private address, 8, Methuen Park, London, N.10.
2. The question was also raised about definitive scores. Were the scores in the future likely to be the Beecham editions, or the original Delius. This, it was felt, was something that would probably never be resolved. The main thing was to ensure that a score of each work was always available.
3. It was suggested that a critical study of the music of Delius would be helpful, and that Deryck Cooke might be approached to write one, although no definite decision was taken.
4. Mr. Bowman suggested that, to swell the Society funds, the annual membership should be raised to two guineas per annum. The large majority of the meeting, however, felt that one guinea was about right, and it was agreed that the subscription should remain at one guinea.

- (5) The subject of private recordings was raised. The Committee agreed to look into this for the chamber works, and advise members in due course what the cost would be. (A note of a recording available of the 3rd violin sonata is given later in the newsletter).
- (6) It was agreed that it was now time for the society to have a written constitution, and the committee promised to get hold of the Wagner society constitution with a view to drawing up a similar one for the Delius society. This would then be submitted for approval at the next Annual General Meeting.
- (7) Mr. Routh spoke of the Redcliffe Festival of British Music which will take place in London this coming autumn. Apparently the London Symphony Orchestra is being approached for one of the concerts, and Mr. Routh wondered whether the Delius Requiem might be one of the works performed. It was unanimously agreed that this would be a wonderful opportunity of hearing this work, which has only ever received one performance in 1920.
- (8) It was agreed that a definitive catalogue of the composers works was required. Apparently both this, and a discography, is in process of preparation, and it will be published in due course under the auspices of the Delius Trust.
- (9) The question was asked whether it would be possible to obtain a tape from the B.B.C. of the Femmore and Gerda recording, and then to have it issued privately as a gramophone record. Apparently, this is impossible, owing, amongst other things, to the Musican's Union rules. However, Mr. Aprahamian said that it was hoped to stage this opera soon. (Let us hope that it is sung in Danish, otherwise the libretto, which is trite at the best of times, and downright awful in parts, will give the anti-Delian critics the time of their lives. The music, though not perhaps the best of Delius, is certainly enchanting in parts. It is a pity the story is so disjointed, otherwise it would surely have been produced more often on the stage).

The most important agreement of the meeting was that members must meet more frequently, and the Committee will endeavour to arrange something every two or three months. More information will be given in the next newsletter, but we hope to find a small hall or room in London where we can play records or have recitals. If any member has a 40' x 30' drawing room, and would be willing to let members use it, please would they let the Chairman know!!

It is unfortunate that members living in or near London have an advantage over their fellow country members, for meetings etc., but people elsewhere should endeavour to contact other members who live nearby, thereby furthering one of the ideals of the society, which is for members to get to know other Delius lovers. It is hoped to keep the list of members up-to-date at regular intervals, so that we are all aware of each others whereabouts.

Sometime during the summer, we understand the B.B.C. will be playing the recording made at the Bradford centenary of the quartet. If possible notice will be given in a future newsletter of the exact time and date, but to ensure that the performance is not missed, a vigilant watch on the Radio Times is recommended. The columns of the Home Service and Third programmes should be sufficient, as it is hardly likely to be used as the introductory music for the Archers!

Apparently, the American recording of the third violin sonata will shortly be available again in this country through Kenneth Holman, Ondine House, Wey Road, Weybridge, Surrey. The artists are Ernest Michaelian, Violin and Viola Hagohian, Piano. The number is MLR 7047, and the cost either 45/- or 47/6d. This disc is not stocked elsewhere, and one of our members received his copy in January 1963, after ordering it in October 1961. Apparently the disc is pressed in batches, and once the current batch is finished it may either disappear, or have to wait another two years or more for the next pressing.

It was suggested at the annual general meeting that it would be useful to list the names and addresses of committee members. They are as follows:-

CHAIRMAN - David Simmons  
119, Constantine Road,  
N.W.3.

Secretary: - Mrs. Betty Ruffle,  
Doughty Cottage,  
Haverfield Gardens,  
Kew, Surrey.

Treasurer: - Miss Anne Todd,  
9, Woodstock Road,  
Alperton, Middx.

(To whom all subscriptions should be sent.)

Dr. Roland Gibson,  
48, Charmouth Court,  
Kings Road,  
Richmond, Surrey.

Rodney Meadows,  
16, Craven Hill,  
W.2.

Charles Barnard,  
16, Priory Close,  
Woking, Surrey.

To whom all correspondence relating to the newsletter should be sent, since it is only on news and views received from members that the newsletter can be produced.

The following is an interesting account from Mr. R.O. Wright of a lecture delivered a year ago by Wilfred Mellers at Dudley Technical College entitled "Man and Nature".

FREDERICK DELIUS - 1942 - 1934

"MAN AND NATURE" - CENTENARY LECTURE BY WILFRED MELLERS

AT DUDLEY TECHNICAL COLLEGE, ON SATURDAY, MAY 19th, 1962

Mr. Mellers commenced with a brief general summary of Delius' early life. This was inexact at times (e.g. Thomas Ward was called Jackson and the Delius family was said to be Dutch in origin!) He generally dismissed all the early works as lacking in character and personality.

He took "Paris" as the first projection of Delius' real personality, particularly stressing the Adagio Section. Then, basing his lecture on the Delius chapter in his book: "Romanticism and the 20th Century" he delineated Delius' position and musical stature as follows:-

A Dionysian retrospective artist, coming at the end of and rejecting all the Western musical traditions. A musical empiricist, whose nostalgia and pantheistic ecstasy desires Nirvana. A positive isolationist, for whom the world weary consciousness, the burden of passion, was the yearning to dissolve in the "Garden of Eden".

Before using musical examples to demonstrate his argument Mr. Mellers stated that he considered Delius with his marvellous "sense of flow" to be one of the supreme masters of form in music. He also said he considered "Mass of Life" to be Delius' greatest work and "Sea Drift" his most perfect conception. Fragments from the slow movement - section of the Violin Concerto were used to illustrate the loss of consciousness and the will in Nature (the surge and sweep of chromatic harmony, the solo violin soaring out of the texture, the solo line like folk song, while the orchestra carries the burden of passion.)

Finally we heard in their entirety: "Song of the High Hills" and "Sea Drift". Mr. Mellers commended the structure of "Song of the High Hills" as an unbroken arch, and one of Delius' four masterpieces (the other four being: "Mass of Life"; "Sea Drift"; and "A Village Romeo and Juliet". He praised "In a Summer Garden" as the finest of Delius' shorter orchestral works. It is interesting to compare this short list with the fifteen orchestral, choral and operatic masterpieces chosen by Deryck Cooke) "Song of the High Hills" represented the burden of the ages, the yearning to dissolve in the "Garden of Eden". When all is accomplished we are left with the eternity of nature. "Sea Drift"- a work of intense subjective retrospection, in which Delius associates himself with Whitman (in the poem) as the boy. Again the lost state of Eden. The wonderful epilogue-reinvoking the Sorrow of the ages. The E major section more poignant than all that has gone before. The unresolved dissonances, the sighs suspended all looking back to Eden.

R.O. Wright      June 1962

In one of his record-playing radio series, Richard Attenborough included a record of Delius' song "Love's Philosophy", sung by Heddle Nash. Attenborough referred to it as a delightful song, but A.K. Holland in his book "The Songs of Delius" writes "It is a song in which the pianist certainly has a good innings and the singer rejoices in his upper register; but there is very little genuine Delius in it, and what there is, is merely mannered and incongruous, such as the three-fold repetition of the last line.....".

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Mr. Rudolf Himmer, a member of our society, of Victoria, Australia, last year sent us news of centenary performances of Delius' music in Australia. He reported on Sir Malcolm Sargent's work at the Adelaide Festival when the "Walk to the Paradise Garden" was performed, also that in the N.S.W. Concerto and vocal competitions, started by Sir Bernard Heinze, and now held by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the winner of the pianoforte section was a young man by the name of Roger Woodward, who played the Delius piano concerto and played it beautifully.

Sir Bernard Heinze, who was Ormond Professor of Music at Melbourne University and is now Director of the N.S.W. State Conservatorium of Music in Sydney, has expressed great interest in our Society.

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Delius wrote some 50 songs (A.K. Holland's book "The Songs of Delius"), based on Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, French, German and English texts, mainly by poets of Delius' own time or a little earlier. A number of these songs, originally written for voice and piano, were subsequently orchestrated by Delius himself. Only a few are recorded, the emphasis being on the early, Scandinavian, songs. It is to be hoped that before long someone will record the Verlaine songs and the Nietzsche songs; also I - Brasil, one of Delius' outstanding songs, and "To Daffodils" and "A Late Lark".

Another item, whose recording is long overdue, is "Cynara", based on words of Ernest Dowson, and originally intended to form part of "Songs of Sunset", which is to be released shortly.

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May 11th: In the programme "Recent Releases" the B.B.C. broadcast a recording, by Sir Thomas Beecham, of the Prelude to "Irmelin".

May 14th: In the programme "Music to Remember" the B.B.C. Welsh Orchestra broadcast "Brigg Feir".

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I would like to inform you that the following amendments have been made to the list of members.

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| 6.  | N.S. Howard, Esq.,<br>Churchill College,<br>Cambridge.                          | 37 | D. Lawford, Esq.,<br>106 Borden Lane,<br>Sittingbourne, Kent.              |
| 17. | J.A. Vincent, Esq.,<br>Eventyr,<br>48 Templar Way,<br>Rothley,<br>Leicester.    | 64 | A. Maund, Esq.,<br>"Ouswell",<br>12 Holmea Drive,<br>Lea Avenue,<br>Crewe. |
| 21  | Dr. J.A. Chaffer,<br>15 York Place,<br>Harrogate, Yorks.                        | 16 | J.F. Bowman, Esq.,<br>etc.   |
| 22  | E.D. Mackerness, Esq.,<br>Dept of English,<br>The University,<br>Sheffield, 10. | 31 | Mrs. D. Fraser,<br>38 Oakland Way,<br>Ewell, Surrey.                       |
| 25  | Mr. & Mrs. M. Greenshields,<br>Drumtairlie,<br>Liff,<br>Dundee, Angus.          |    |  |

New Member: 101. M. Walker, Esq.,  
15 Rodway Road,  
London, S.W.15.

Finally, I have received several letters as a result of the letter which appeared in the May issue of the Gramophone, and I intend replying to these personally during the next week, as well as several other which members have been kind enough to write to me. It is always pleasant hearing from members, and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all those who do write.

DAVID SIMMONS

CHAIRMAN